UNDERSTANDING COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN WILDLIFE CONSERVATION IN AMBOSELI ECOSYSTEM, KENYA

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EGERTON UNIVERSITY

AUGUST, 2014
DECLARATION AND RECOMMENDATION

DECLARATION

This thesis is my original work and to the best of my knowledge has not been presented before for the conferment of any other degree.

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RECOMMENDATION

This thesis has been submitted for examination with our approval as the university supervisors.

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my daughters Vivian and Sonia for the support, understanding and encouragement given during my studies.
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ABSTRACT

This study examined the extent to which the local community participated in wildlife conservation in Amboseli Ecosystem guided by three objectives: to examine the effect of land tenure and land use systems on community participation in wildlife conservation; to assess the implication of wildlife policies and legal framework on community participation in wildlife conservation; and to identify incentives for enhanced community participation and securing more space for wildlife conservation. This study was conducted through a cross sectional study design in two group ranches (Olgulului and Kimana). This study was informed by the Social Exchange Theory and supported by the General Systems Theory. The population of this study consisted of all the 1,342 households in two group ranches. A sample of 134 households was drawn with the unit of analysis being the household head (adult male aged 26 to 68 years). Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected using semi structured interviews. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to analyze the data. Study findings indicated that the existing land tenure and land use systems appear not to encourage community participation in wildlife conservation. The respondents observed that the existing Kenyan wildlife policies and legal framework moderately influence community participation in wildlife conservation. This study established that with proper incentives and adopting land use practices compatible with wildlife conservation; enumerating benefits and liabilities of wildlife outside Amboseli National Park; creating enabling institutional arrangements that enhance wildlife conservation; enhanced benefit sharing and developing land use plan which will guide land use types within certain areas are measures that can create more space for wildlife conservation. This study concluded that communities living around Amboseli National Park will seek to experience a sense of reciprocation through their involvement in conservation activities to ensure that they receive returns for leasing or putting easements on their land for wildlife use only, while the conservation agencies have to ensure that payment for easement and leases is sustained. For policy and practical considerations, it is recommended that the government should to revise the revenue allocation mechanism with a focus on communities hosting wildlife on their lands, operationalize Land Management Acts, aid the establishment of ecotourism ventures, initiate land banking and direct land purchases, strengthen community based enterprises, and implement regulatory frameworks for funding conservation initiatives.
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